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UNDP and the Romanian Ministry of Public Information launch project on access to information

UNDP Romania and the Ministry of Public Information jointly launched a project in support of the implementation of Romania's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

In a joint press conference on 28 February 2003, the UNDP Representative, Mrs. Soknan Han Jung and the Minister of Public Information, Mr. Vasile Dâncu announced a new partnership between public institutions, UNDP and civil society to promote access to public information under FOIA. Through a project funded by UNDP's Thematic Trust Fund on Democratic Governance and executed by an NGO Asociatia Pro Democratia, an open network of local resource centers on public information will be established and an Internet portal for public information will be developed. The centers will provide services to citizens and public institutions, acting as a facilitator in the implementation of FOIA at the decentralized level.



The UNDP Resident Representative and the Minister of Public Information sign the project in the presence of the media

Ms. Jung said that, if properly implemented, FOIA could leverage dramatic changes in the organizational culture and the functioning of public institutions, enhancing their transparency and accountability. Minister Dâncu highlighted the challenges faced during the first year of implementation, specially at the decentralized level, but also the important successes achieved and the Government's commitment to pursue its drive towards more transparency at all levels of public administration.



National media has a strong interest in FOIA implementation

Responding to questions from the media, the UNDP Representative stressed that FOIA implementation is bound to be a difficult process, as it has been a real challenge even for developed countries. Rather than limiting itself to critical monitoring of compliance, as some donor agencies and NGOs do, UNDP has made a commitment to creating partnerships to strengthen national capacities for FOIA implementation.

The event gathered the attention of all major national media outlets, who have been supporting FOIA awareness campaigns and show a strong interest in access to public information.

Through this project, UNDP and its partners hope to make a difference in the way Romanians relate to their public institutions.

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